In the claims:

Please cancel claims 1-4, 6-8, 10, 11, 13, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 23 without prejudice.

1   24.   (New) A method comprising:

2   sending a request for information from a central computer to a remote database,

3   the central computer monitoring and operating a smart appliance sharing a physical

4   environment with the central computer, the remote database being maintained and

5   periodically updated by a seller of the smart appliance;

6   receiving the requested information from the remote database at the central

7   computer, the information being related to the smart appliance; and

8   transmitting a control signal from the central computer to the smart appliance, the

9.   control signal being generated by the central computer based on the information received

10   from the remote database, wherein the control signal functionally operates the smart

11   appliance.

1   25.   (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the seller of the smart device

2   comprises one or more of a manufacturer of the smart device, a wholesaler of the smart

3   device, and a retailer of the smart device.

1   26.   (New) The method of claim 24, wherein the central computer requests the

2   information from the remote database is using an Internet connection.

1 29 27. (New) A machine-readable medium having stored thereon data

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2 representing instructions, which, when executed by a processor of a central computer

3 cause the central computer to perform operations comprising:

4   sending a request for information from the central computer to a remote database,

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5 the central computer monitoring and operating a smart appliance sharing a physical

6 environment with the central computer, the remote database being maintained and

7 periodically updated by a seller of the smart appliance;

8   receiving the requested information from the remote database at the central

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9 computer, the information being related to the smart appliance; and

10   transmitting a control signal from the central computer to the smart appliance, the

11 control signal being generated by the central computer based on the information received

12 from the remote database, wherein the control signal functionally operates the smart

13 appliance.

1 30 28.   (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 29 27, wherein the seller of

2 the smart device comprises one or more of a manufacturer of the smart device, a

3 wholesaler of the smart device, and a retailer of the smart device.

1 31 29.   (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 29 27, wherein the central

2 computer requests the information from the remote database is using an Internet

3 connection.

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1   ~~30.~~   (New) A central computer system comprising:

2   a communications device to be coupled to a network to enable the central

3   computer to communicate with a remote database and a smart appliance;

4   a processor coupled to the communications device, the processor to:

5   send a request for information from the central computer to the remote database

6   using the communications device, the central computer monitoring and operating the

7   smart appliance sharing a physical environment with the central computer, the remote

8   database being maintained and periodically updated by a seller of the smart appliance;

9   receive the requested information from the remote database at the central

10   computer using the communications device, the information being related to the smart

11   appliance; and

12   transmit a control signal from the central computer to the smart appliance using

13   the communications device, the control signal being generated by the processor based on

14   the information received from the remote database, wherein the control signal

15   functionally operates the smart appliance.

1   31.   (New) The central computer system of claim 30, wherein the s ller of th

smart device comprises one or more of a manufacturer of the smart device, a wholesaler

3   of the smart device, and a retailer of the smart device.

4   32.   (New) The central computer system of claim 30, wherein the

5   communications device comprises a modem.

6   33.   (New) A method comprising:

7   collecting usage information from a smart appliance at a central computer sharing

8   a physical environment with the smart appliance;

9   sending a request for maintenance information from the central computer to a

10   remote database, the remote database being updated by a seller of the smart appliance;

11   receiving the requested maintenance information from the remote database at the

12   central computer, the maintenance information related to scheduled repairs of the smart

13   appliance; and·

14   determining whether the smart device is due for a scheduled repair using the

15   received maintenance information and the collected usage information.

1   34.   (New) The method of claim 33, wherein the seller of the smart device

2   comprises one or more of a manufacturer of the smart device, a wholesaler of the smart

3   device, and a retailer of the smart device.

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35. (New) The method of claim 35, wherein the usage information comprises

2   one or more of:

3   an average length of time the one or more smart devices has been in operation

4   over a period of time;

5   a number of occasions the one or more smart devices has been in operation over

6   the period of time;

7   a number of times maintenance was performed on the one or more smart devices

8   over the period of time; and

9   types of maintenance operations that were performed on the one or more smart

10   devices over the period of time.